

TENANT IMPROVEMENTS



This information bulletin contains information intended to assist you in obtaining permits for tenant improvements. Tenant improvements are defined as non-structural alterations to an existing commercial or industrial space, such as: completion of the interior of a shell building; conversion of warehouse space to office use; installation of a commercial exhaust hood for a restaurant; window and door awnings; facade work; plumbing, mechanical, and electrical additions, and similar items that generally don't affect the structural components of a building.

Even though no structural systems are affected by a tenant improvement, the alterations will be reviewed for compliance with the non-structural provisions of the Uniform Codes for such areas of concern as exiting, disabled accessibility to the improved area, the specific use of the area of improvements, framing of the interior walls and suspended ceilings, lighting, electrical layout and wiring, duct work, plumbing, energy compliance, zoning and parking requirements, and water and sewer requirements.

There are three phases of the Tenant Improvement Permit process in Carlsbad. They are: (1) Plan Check, (2) Permit Issuance, (3) and Inspections. Upon completing the plan check process, the City issues a "Combination" Building Permit. This is a permit for the complete tenant improvement. The permit will include any proposed structural modifications, plumbing, electrical, and mechanical alterations shown on approved on the plans. Once the permit is issued, certain field inspections are required to ensure that the work complies with the approved plans and the Uniform Building Codes.

PLANS AND DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

You will need a minimal amount of plans and documents for tenant improvement permits.

For initial submittals please bring in:

- Three (3) sets of proposed plans.
- Completed Permit Application.
- Completed Hazardous Material Questionnaire.
- Application for Disabled Access Unreasonable Hardship Exception (if applicable).
- Plan Check Deposit.

The Plans Must Include:

Cover Sheet / Site Plan - The plans must identify the intended use or nature of the business (i.e., electronic assembly, general office, retail sales). The site plan shows the general layout of the site and indicates the location of the tenant improvement. It is also necessary to show the entire floor the building even though the proposed tenant improvement covers only a portion of the floor area so that exiting can be reviewed. It is acceptable to use a copy of an existing plan for the building so long as the scope of work is clear and the plan is readable.

Floor Plan - This plan contains the interior dimensions of the improved space and the use of all the rooms. Typically the floor plan shows existing walls, the walls to be removed, and any new walls. It distinctly notes interior partitions, demising walls, one hour rated corridor walls, and other rated walls. It shows windows and doors, door hardware and threshold details, and the location of plumbing fixtures. The plan also clearly notes new, relocated, existing, and removed fixtures and the location of any electrical equipment and devices.

Reflected ceiling plan - This plan shows the layout of the lighting and ceiling system and may show ceiling air registers. Please distinctly note existing and new systems and areas where the ceiling tile will be replaced.

Framing details - These details contain section views specifying framing, bracing, insulation, and wall coverings for all the wall and ceiling systems.

Electrical plan - The electrical plan should include a single line diagram of any proposed new and all existing panels. Please show existing circuits, new circuits, the rating of the panel, and total demand on the panel. When the electrical service overcurrent device is made larger, a load calculation for the service is required.

Lighting Plan - This plan shows any new or relocated lighting fixtures and how they are switched. This may be shown on the ceiling plan.

Mechanical Plan - This plan shows the type and location of new and existing air conditioners or heating units, and the associated ducts for each system. The plan must show any required fire dampers. If you only propose to relocate existing ceiling diffusers, please note that on the ceiling plan along with their proposed locations.

Plumbing Plan - This plan shows the size, type and location of all rough plumbing and fixtures. Complex plumbing system modifications require the submittal of an isometric diagram of the proposed modification to the DWV system.

Title 24 Energy Compliance Plans - For adding new conditioned space, replacing heating/ cooling systems, or revising the lighting system, please show compliance with the energy package for the existing building or submit plans with Title 24 calculations. Information and publications on Title 24 Energy Standards are available from the California Energy Commission, (800) 772-3300.

Disabled Accessibility - All privately funded public accommodations and commercial facilities are required to be accessible to persons with physical disabilities. During plan review, the tenant improvement will be reviewed for compliance with the California State Building Standards Code (Title 24).

Existing buildings and facilities must comply with current access requirements when alterations, repairs, and additions are made. Compliance requirements for existing buildings include providing a primary entrance to the facility, a path of travel to the area being altered, sanitary facilities, drinking fountains (if provided), and public telephones (if provided).

Although all modified spaces must meet the current access regulations for new buildings, small projects may qualify for an hardship exception. Where the cost of the alterations necessary for strict compliance disproportionately increases the cost of the project, an unreasonable hardship exception may be granted. A disproportionate increase (unreasonable hardship) occurs when the cost of compliance exceeds 20% of the cost of the project.

When a hardship exception is granted, those features which can be made to comply within the 20% cap, must be done as a part of the tenant improvement. Only those features which increase the cost of the project by more than 20% are exempt. Plans must show the accessibility features to be included in the project. Please see the attached hardship application.

PLAN CHECK PROCESS

The tenant improvement plan check process in Carlsbad is performed by EsGil Corporation. All initial applications must be submitted to the City Building Department for distribution to all City Departments and to EsGil. Re-submittals of corrected plans may be made directly to EsGil, but it is important to note that those plans will not be reviewed by the City Departments again until after EsGil completes their review.

The City strongly recommends that all plans be processed in one of two ways:

1. Submit all corrected plans through the City (three sets each time) so the City can route them to all related departments; or
2. Process directly with all City departments and EsGil concurrently. Deliver the sets directly to EsGil, the Planning/Engineering departments, and the Fire

Department. This may save some transit time.

When the plans are approved and the permits are ready to issue, the contact person will be notified by telephone and a tabulation of the fees will be given.

ADDITIONAL PLANS AND PERMITS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS

The Fire Department requires separate submittals of plans for automatic fire sprinklers, commercial exhaust hoods and ducts, spray booths, and other hazardous installations. Submit three sets of these plans directly to the Fire Department. Separate fees may be charged for these permits.

If County Health Department requires a separate permit, please provide the City proof of this permit prior to issuance of the City Building Permit. The Hazardous Material sign off sheet must be approved by AQMD as well.

PERMIT ISSUANCE

All fees associated with the building permit must be paid at the time the permit is issued. Fees may be paid in cash, check, or credit card (VISA or Mastercard). When the permit is issued, the applicant will receive a copy of the Building Permit, a copy of the approved plans for use during inspections, and a large, yellow job record card for the field inspector to sign when inspections are cleared.

INSPECTIONS

Inspections may be scheduled after the permit is issued. The City Building and Fire Departments do not make "courtesy inspections" for projects in plan check. It is not legal to begin construction prior to permit issuance. When it comes to the City's attention that work has begun prior to issuance of the permits, a STOP WORK NOTICE will be posted on the site, and the building permit fee may be doubled.

Building Inspections must be scheduled via the inspection request voice mail telephone by calling 602-2725. This call may be made anytime of the day. Inspection requests received before 2 p.m. will be made the next working day. Please note this during holidays or extended weekends. Please do not schedule inspections by calling the inspectors directly. If you leave requests on an inspector's personal voice mail box, the request will not be picked up if the inspector is not at work. Always request building inspections by calling 602-2725.

When requesting inspections, leave the permit number, job address (including the suite number), your name and telephone number, and the type of inspection needed. If there is a preference as to a morning or afternoon inspection, or there is a special circumstance (access to the tenant space) please leave that information also. The City will try to accommodate the particular circumstances. The inspector for the project may be reached in the morning between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. or between 3:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. by calling 602-2700 or the inspector's direct telephone number.

The approved plans and the job record card must be available for the inspector on the job site. When the work is approved to cover, the inspector will sign the job record card. This is the owner's record of inspections; make sure the inspector signs the card and protect the card from theft, weather, or misplacement.

Fire Department inspections may be scheduled after the permit is issued. Inspections must be scheduled by calling 602-4660. Do not call inspectors directly to request an inspection. If you leave a message on a personal voice mail box, and the inspector is not at work, the request will not be answered. Call for Fire Inspections 48 hours in advance.

FINAL INSPECTION

Tenant improvements usually only require a final inspection by the Building and Fire inspectors. Some improvements may also require the County Health Department, or Planning Department approvals. The Building Inspector is the coordinator of this process. The Building Inspector will ensure that the appropriate departments are notified of your request for a final inspection or meter release. After those departments are notified, the project superintendent must schedule walk through with those departments by calling the telephone numbers at the bottom of the job record card. Make sure all inspectors sign the job record card. With the exception of restaurants, the Building Inspector is the last person to sign the job off as final. Contractors can facilitate the final inspection process by ensuring all the inspectors have signed the job record card before the building inspector signs off a final approval for occupancy.